

XV. *An Account of a remarkable Darknes
at Detroit, in America: In a Letter from
the Rev. Mr. James Stirling, to Mr.
John Duncan: communicated by Samuel
Mead, Esq; F. R. S.*

Detroit, 25th Oct. 1762.

S I R,

Read March 3,
1763.

A Man in business seldom troubles himself about news; yet the following is so uncommon, I cannot neglect acquainting you therewith. Tuesday last, being the 19th instant, we had almost total darkness for the most of the day. I got up at day break: about 10 minutes after I observed it got no lighter than before; the same darkness continued untill 9 o'clock, when it cleared up a little. We then, for the space of about a quarter of an hour, saw the body of the Sun, which appeared as red as blood, and more than three times as large as usual. The air all this time, which was very dense, was of a dirty yellowish green colour. I was obliged to light candles to see to dine, at one o'clock, notwithstanding the table was placed close by two large windows. About 3 the darkness became more horrible, which augmented untill half past 3, when the wind breezed up from the S. W. and brought on some drops of rain or rather sulphur, and dirt, for it appeared more like the latter than the former,
both

both in smell and quality. I took a leaf of clean paper, and held it out in the rain, which rendered it black whenever the drops fell upon it; but, when held near the fire, turned to a yellow colour, and when burned, it fizzed on the paper like wet powder. During this shower, the air was almost suffocating with a strong sulphurous smell; it cleared up a little after the rain. There were various conjectures about the cause of this natural incident. The Indians, and vulgar among the French, said, that the English, which lately arrived from Niagara in the vessel, had brought the plague with them: Others imagined it might have been occasioned by the burning of the woods: But I think it most probable, that it might have been occasioned by the eruption of some volcano, or subterraneous fire, whereby the sulphurous matter may have been emitted in the the air, and contained therein, until, meeting with some watery clouds, it has fallen down together with the rain.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

James Stirling.